

Bible Reading Schedule The Golden Thread

July 3 – Job 1:1 – 11

The book of Job teaches us some very powerful truths about ourselves, God and the world we live in. The book of Job is about a man who is looking for answers that just don't seem to be there. Why does a good man have to suffer? The answer is found in today's reading. We are part of something that is much bigger than just our own lives. Just like Job, we are in the midst of a spiritual battle that most of us are completely unaware is going on around us. We were created by God to bring glory to God, and any time Satan can get us to revolt against what God has created us to do he succeeds at his mission. The fact is we are in the middle of a spiritual war that is raging between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. In today's reading Satan is convinced that if God will allow him to take the things that God has used to bless Job's life that Job will rebel against God. In other words, Satan's claim is that the only reason Job loves God is because of what God has done for Job, and Satan's bet is that the minute God allows the blessings to be removed from Job's life Job will turn against God, which would be a victory for Satan.

In each of our lives we are called to stand for something. The question is will we stand with our God no matter what life brings or will we turn away from God if life gets too hard? Do we love God just because of what we get from God, or do we love God just because He is God?

There are a couple of important things to note in this passage. First God is not the author of evil, Satan is.

1 John 1:5 *God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.*

But there are times when God allows Satan to touch our lives with evil so that our faith is tested.

James 1:2-4 *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

So often, like Job, when troubles come to our lives we ask God why, but maybe a better question would be to ask God what? What do you want

me to do with this trouble that has come into my life? How can I glorify you through this trouble? We must always remember that our real struggle is not against flesh and blood but against unseen spiritual forces that are at work trying to shipwreck our faith.

Ephesians 6:12-18 *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

July 4 – Job 1: 12 – 2: 9

The things that happen to Job in today's reading are truly awful. Job loses everything, his family, his wealth, and his health. All that he has left is his wife who tells Job that he should just curse God and die. That is exactly what Satan would love for Job to do. But look how Job responds in 2:10; "Shall we accept good from God and trouble?" Job knew that whatever came into his life was allowed to come into it by God. Job knew that; he just didn't understand why. Job was a righteous man who was commended by God for his righteousness, and yet God still allowed all of this to come into Job's life. It doesn't seem fair does it? And if we are honest sometimes the suffering we have to endure doesn't seem fair either. But Job's suffering and our suffering doesn't begin to compare to the suffering Christ endured for us. The suffering Christ endured was completely unfair, because he was completely sinless. All of us, including Job, are sinners who deserve nothing good from God, but Jesus was sinless and deserved none of the evil that came to his life. Jesus didn't deserve to suffer before Pontius Pilate, he didn't deserve for the soldiers to mock him and beat him, he didn't deserve to be nailed to the cross like the worst kind of criminal, he didn't deserve to hang there naked as people hurled insults at him, he didn't deserve for God the Father to turn his back on him as

he suffered and died, but that is exactly what happened to Jesus. As Jesus was breathing his last breaths he was covered with our sin, and because of that the Father could no longer look at him, and God turned His back on His only Son.

Matthew 27:46 *About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"-- which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

The suffering that Jesus endured on our behalf was far more than anything Job experienced, and far more than any of us will ever experience. None of us, in this lifetime will know what is like to have the Father turn away from us and abandon us. It was especially painful for Jesus because of the closeness he had enjoyed with the Father since the dawn of time. But to save us from our sin, Jesus took the punishment that he didn't deserve, so that we could be spared from it. It was the most unfair thing that could ever happen to anyone, but Jesus rejoiced in the suffering that he took for our sake, because he knew that his suffering would bring us life. The injustice that Jesus faced on our behalf would save us from the justice that we deserve because of our sin.

July 5 – Job 19

As you read chapter 19, you get a clear sense of the suffering that Job is enduring, as well as a clear sense that Job is trying to figure out why he is having to suffer so much. Job's friends are convinced that the reason why Job is suffering so much is because Job is sinful. That's what Job is referring to in verses 2 – 4. Rather than comforting Job in his misery, these friends judge Job and attack him without reason. In verse 6, Job arrives at the conclusion that God has wronged him by bringing such suffering into his life. Job doesn't turn against God, but he is beginning to question God's sense of justice, and as a result, Job cries out to God for relief, and he cries out to his friends for some sympathy (verses 5 – 22). But in verses 21 – 27, Job makes it clear that he has not given up hope. Look at verses 23 and 24. Job wants his words recorded for all to read, and those words are that Job has not lost hope in God. Even though Jesus had not yet come to earth, and even though Job certainly didn't know Jesus as his redeemer, Job knew that somewhere there was someone who could make sense of all of Job's

suffering. Job knows that somewhere there is Redeemer who will make things right, and restore things to the way they ought to be.

Look closely at what Job says in verses 26 and 27. Even if Job dies, Job is confident that he will one day see God. How can Job be so confident? Because Job knows that there is one who can redeem this terrible situation and make things right again. Even though Job couldn't state it in New Testament terms, because Jesus had not yet come, Job was confident that God would find a way to make things right. Job knew that even though it seemed like in the moment Job was living in that God was unjust, Job knew this couldn't be true. Be sure to understand this. Job had his questions, and Job had his doubts, but he never lost hope in God. How much truer should this be for us? Job did not yet have Jesus. Jesus was just a concept to Job. But we have Jesus, we should be even more confident than Job was that our Redeemer lives. Even though we may temporarily be walking through the valley of the shadow of death, we know because of Christ that one day Jesus will stand upon the earth (verse 25) and make all things right again.

2 Corinthians 4:7-18 *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.... ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence..... ¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

Jesus is the one who makes sense of our suffering, because Jesus gives us an eternal hope that puts our temporary suffering into a new perspective.

July 6 – Job 40: 1 – 14, 42: 1 – 6

God has been silent for much of the Book of Job. We saw God in the opening chapters as Satan came to God for permission to afflict and test Job, but then as Job suffers, God is silent. Finally, in chapter 37 God shows up, and begins to speak to Job. It is powerful to sit down and read chapters 38 to 42 in one reading and put yourself in Job's shoes,

and think about how you would feel if God showed up and started questioning you the way He was questioning Job. In today's reading we read just a small portion of the dialogue between God and Job, and God is asking Job some very pointed questions:

"Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him?" In other words, God is asking Job if Job is really sure that he wants to question an almighty God and what an almighty God is at work doing. Next in verse 8, God asks Job if Job is willing to discredit God's justice to try to vindicate himself. In other words, who is Job to judge God? Finally, God asks Job if Job is powerful enough to save himself (verses 8 – 14). Those are pointed questions aren't they? What right do we have to question and correct God? What power do we have to change anything about our situation?

When we are faced with the very same questions that Job was faced with our answer must be just like his that we find in Job 42: 1 – 6. Do you understand what Job is saying? He is saying he spoke without really thinking. He thought he knew God and he thought he knew himself, but when God showed up Job realized he didn't know anything. Sometimes it is hard for us to trust God in the midst of our struggles. Like Job, we tend to think we are good people who don't deserve to suffer, but we know so little about ourselves, so little about God, and so little about the spiritual warfare that is raging all around us. Stop and think about Jesus for a moment. Is your life better than his? Did he deserve to suffer more than you do? Does the suffering you are going through even begin to compare to the suffering that Jesus endured? The answer is clear, Jesus suffered far more than we ever will, and unlike us he didn't deserve to suffer at all. But Jesus understood the spiritual warfare that he was in the midst of, and Jesus willingly endured the undeserved suffering so that God the Father would be glorified, and we could be saved from our sin.

1 Peter 2:21 *To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.* ²² *"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."* ²³ *When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.* ²⁴ *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.* ²⁵ *For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

As followers of Christ, we have the same opportunity to glorify God in the midst of our suffering. The question we should ask in the midst of our suffering isn't why, it is how? Rather than asking why we are suffering, we should instead ask God how we can glorify Him in the midst of our suffering.

1 Peter 4:12-19 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you....¹⁹ So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

July 7 – Psalm 1

In this Psalm the Psalmist clearly marks out the difference between the righteous (those who live a life pleasing to God), and the unrighteous (those who live to please themselves).

In verse 1 the Psalmist starts by pointing out what the righteous avoid. They do not seek the counsel of the wicked, they do not stand side by side with the unrighteous, and they do not sit and mock that which is holy. We live in a world that increasingly demands that we, as Christians, do all of those things, but it is something we must absolutely resist doing, because we have been redeemed and bought with the blood of Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 *You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.*

Paul quoting from Isaiah 52 reminds the Christians that he is writing to in Corinth that, just like Old Testament Israel, we are called to be different and separate from those who belong to the world, because we no longer have anything in common with them.

2 Corinthians 6:15 - 7:1 *What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." ¹⁷ "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." ¹⁸ "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*

In the same way Jesus exhorts those who are his followers to not go down the well traveled path of the world, but instead, find the less traveled path that leads to eternal life.

Matthew 7:13-14 *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*

The day is coming when we will be permanently separated from the world, because the unrighteous will not be allowed to enter into the eternal heavenly city.

Revelation 22:13-15 *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. ¹⁴ "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.*

The question is how to live this out in our day to day lives. To understand that let's think about what Jesus said in:

John 17:15-17 *My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*

Until Jesus comes again to take us to that new heavenly city we will be in the world, but that doesn't mean we have to be part of the world. We don't have to think, talk or act like the world acts, because Christ has redeemed us from our former way of life.

Ephesians 4:22-24 *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

July 8 – Psalm 2

Psalm 2 gives us a very clear picture of Jesus, our great king, and it is quoted extensively by the writers of the New Testament as proof that Jesus is who he claimed to be. The Psalmist starts this Psalm by looking at man's rebellion against the rule of God (verses 1 – 3). But what is God doing as man rebels against Him? He is laughing at our folly (verse 4)! Who are we to think that we can take God's place and rule over our own lives? Man's problem ever since Adam and Eve first sinned in the Garden is that we try to take God's place and become our

own rulers of our lives. But verse 6 makes it clear that God has already chosen a King to rule over all the nations and that King is His Son Jesus.

In verses 7–8 God proclaims Jesus his Son to be the Great King: “The Lord said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage.’” Throughout the New Testament the apostles consistently quote from these verses as they make their case that Jesus is indeed the King of Kings. They couple this verse with the resurrection and make the point that when God raised Jesus from the dead God was powerfully declaring that Jesus was not merely His eternal Son but was also the incarnate Messiah — the king who would rule and reign over all.

Acts 13:30-33 *But God raised him from the dead, ³¹ and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people. ³² "We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers ³³ he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: "'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.'*

The divine, eternal Son of God, after experiencing the humility of our humanity in the incarnation, and after descending to the lowest place as the Suffering Servant, now carries our humanity with Him in His great exaltation to the highest place, installed at the Father’s right hand to reign as far as the curse is found.

Philippians 2:9-11 *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

The apostles even interpret their persecution in light of the “raging of the nations” against Christ, the appointed King, as described in verses 1–2.

Acts 4:25-28 *You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.' ²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.*

And Jesus, Himself, when He commands the apostles to disciple the nations in the Great Commission is simply claiming the promise God made in verse 8 that the nations would become his inheritance.

Matthew 28:18-20 *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Jesus is indeed our Great King, whether we choose to acknowledge Him as that or not. We are given the opportunity to willingly bow at his feet and proclaim Him as our Lord and savior, or the day will come when all will be forced to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord.

Psalms 2:9 - 3:1 *You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." ¹⁰ Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. ¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

July 9 – Psalm 3

As you read in the inscription to this Psalm, you see David wrote this Psalm when he was on the run from his son Absalom, after Absalom had staged a coup against David. As you read the account of this in 2 Samuel, the whole nation had gone over to Absalom, except for David's closest friends. David was feeling outnumbered and very vulnerable as he wrote the words of this Psalm. Where would his help come from? The answer is there in verse 8, "salvation belongs to the Lord." God would save him. God would be as a shield around him protecting him from those who sought to take his life. The thought of God's protection gave David such peace that he could lie down and sleep soundly.

All of David's fears are vanquished by the thought of God's presence being with him. What are you afraid of today? The enemy is there, lurking in the shadows.

1 Peter 5:8 *Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

We have much to be afraid of, but no need to be afraid because:

1 John 4:4 *Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

As Christians, we often forget that because Christ the power of Christ is in us. Listen again to Jesus' familiar words that he spoke right before he ascended into heaven.

Matthew 28: 19 *Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*

Think of what that means. Jesus is it—the ultimate. There is no one or no thing greater than him. Through his death and resurrection, he has conquered Satan, sin, and death, so what could there possibly be in your life that he cannot conquer?

But Jesus didn't stop there, he went on to say this:

Matthew 28: 20 *And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

By faith in Christ, the presence of Christ and the power of Christ are in you. He is a shield around you, the glory and the lifter of your head.

If you have time today, and internet access, Google a YouTube video: "The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir Thou Oh Lord" and let their anthem based on this Psalm fill your soul.